

A
DEFENCE
AND
CONTINUATION
Of the Discourse concerning the
PERIOD
OF
HUMANE LIFE.

BEING
A Reply to a late Answer;
Entituled, *A Letter to*
a Gentleman, &c.

To which is added,

AN APPENDIX,

Wherein several Objections urged in
private, are considered, and Mr.
Gales severe, but groundless Charge
is Examined.

LONDON,

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DEFENCE

AND
CONTINUATION

PERIOD

OF

THE
LIFE

AN APPENDIX

TO THE HISTORY OF THE
LIFE OF THE
LORD OF THE
TREASURY

BY
JAMES
MACKINTOSH



T H E
PREFACE.

READER,

IF Custom had not made it common to prefix Epistles to Books, I had freely permitted thee to read the following Discourse without the trouble of a preliminary Salutation: but the truth is, I like not to be either Singular or Uncivil:

And yet, I confess I have but very little to acquaint thee with: for as I intend not to court your kind acceptance of the following Discourse, so
neither

The Preface.

neither do I designe to disparage it, or discourage thee from perusing it.

Only if I can prevail, I heartily wish thou wouldest read without prejudice, and with that Candor that becomes an impartial and discreet Reader: and then, either give, or deny it entertainment as you think fit; for I assure thee The Author desires to impose nothing upon thy faith, but what is able to abide the test. If he has erred, he is only ambitious to have no followers.

When I gave way to the publishing of the former Discourse, I expected not to have met with so many Enemies. But I see the old saying holds good, veritas

The Preface.

titas odium parit. As for those severe censures some men have urged, I have endeavoured to remove them in the following Discourse, especially in the Appendix. For personal reflections (the only weapons others have made use of; although they be as Ignorant who I am, as I desire they should be,) these I may very rationally contemn, without the fear of censure from the strictest Zoilus.

I confess next to no adversary, a fair and ingenuous one is the most desirable; but whether it has been my Good fortune (or if you please to say Fate) to be blessed with such, after thou hast perused both what they and I say thou wilt be able to judge.

And

The Preface.

And upon this account (though not only) I heartily wish thou wouldest be pleased to compare the Reply and Answer, and both with the First Discourse, which accidentally (I assure thee not designedly) gave birth to them; in doing of which if thou reapst no advantage thyself, yet I am sure thou shalt oblige the Booksellers to give thee thanks.

FAREWELL.

(F)



DEFENCE

OF THE

BOOK.

ENTITLED,

A Discourse concerning the Period
of HUMANE LIFE.

Here never was any
age in which the arch-
ing humour of writing
many Books was more
truly visible, than in the present :
we may now with the Poet re-
grate, that, *Scribimus indocti*
doctique, every man thinks him-
self fit enough to spin out a

A

dis-

discourse for the Press; hence is it, that the World is even ready to complain of the Burden. I know it is usual to pretend the importunity of necessity, a very fair and specious pretext, but I much doubt, if it be always real and true.

BUT least I seem accessory to the fault I so much condemn, I here enter my solemn protest; that as it was no piece of vanity that engaged me to write the former discourse, so neither am I now acted by that principle to defend it: If it had been any unworthy motive that did first animate me, I should now have appeared in Sackcloth, with a free and ingenuous confession of the crime.

BUT having in the Preface to that discourse already satisfied the World concerning the design, both of the Author, and of the Book: I shall now forbear to give a more tedious account.

AND

AND because I promised if the judicious should dislike any thing in the Book, either to satisfy them, or yield to the force of their clearer discoveries: I am now come to tell them, that I will keep my promise; and stand to that engagement.

MUCH has been said in private Cabals against both Author and Book: that the Author is an *Arminian*, is but a modest censure, which I assure them does not in the least offend me. As for their more severe thundrings, in condemning the Book to the flames, and the Author to the Pillory; it is good their power is not able to effect what they please. I see if they cannot answer the Book, they are resolved to make both it and the Author odious enough. But all the slanders that malice can invent, shall never discourage me from defence of the Truth.

IF the great Captain of our Salvation was said to be a *Samaritan*, and to have a Devil: It is but a small matter that I should meet with disingenuous men, who yet brand me with more gentile crimes. If my own familiar friends should carry themselves demurely towards me, this is no harder measure than what better men than I have experienced. It is an old, but true saying, *Veritas odium parit*. The great Apostle of the Gentiles did find it so, *Am I become your Enemy because I tell you the truth?* And since this is also my lot, I shall bear those various censures very patiently, not intending to render reviling for reviling, but Blessing for Cursing: *Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

BUT that I may not be further tedious, I shall pass by all private censures, and now only consider an Answer, which was sent me by

by the Gentleman who published my former Books, with the following Letter.

SIR,

BEing informed that there was an Answer to your late discourse concerning the Period of Humane Life, intended for the Press; I ceased not 'till I had spoke with the person that had it: And although I had but small acquaintance with him, yet his ingenuity was such, that I obtained a sight of it; but finding it so long that I could not then peruse it, I earnestly desired to know if he had the confidence to trust me with it; freely adding, that I knew how to communicate it to you (not telling who you were,) at first he seemed to refuse, but after I had shewed him the reasonableness of my desire, he condescended. Sir, The Answer is thought to be no ways despicable; therefore if your affairs of greater concern can

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allow, I assure you your speedy answer to; and return of these Papers, will be very acceptable to;

S I R ,

Your obliged Servant.

I have here set down this Letter, that men may know by what means I obtained a sight of the answer before it was Printed.

The R E P L Y .

S I R ,

SOME few days ago I received yours, with the bundle of Paper. I heartily thank you for the pains you have taken in that particular. I have now perused those Papers, which I find are bespattered with very much Gall
and

and bitterness, it is a severe challenge, *that I have fallen upon very bad principles, and maintain a position contrary both to the Doctrin of our Church, and of all sober and Orthodox Divines.* If this were true as it is false, the Author might be excused for his over much zeal, but since the censure is altogether void of truth, he must pardon me to say, that the calumny is inexcusable: but I love not to fling Dirt upon those, who take the liberty to bespatter me with it; it were easie to recriminate, but our great Master never taught any such lesson.

BUT as I do not know of what Church the Author is a Member, (for it may be, I oppose, that Doctrin that is hotly taught in some particular Churches) so neither do I know what Divines may be Orthodox in his account: Sure I am, that both the best and most learned Writers of this and former

ages, have maintained the sentiments I have embraced.

WHETHER the Authors opinion or mine does best *agree with the humours of bad men*, needs but very little judgment to determine. Pray, how can it gratifie any wicked man to tell him, that he may prolong his days (a thing the most vitious and apostate to wish) if he would obey the Laws of Heaven? And upon the other hand, that his days shall be shortened (a heavy and unpleasant message to bad men, who have no other heaven but what they enjoy upon Earth) if he continues in his wickedness? Methinks this principle is so far from encouraging men to sin, that it quite opposeth it; affording men most excellent encouragements to promote piety, and to shun all manner of vices, *which lead down to the Chambers of Death.*

BUT if we now enquire how
the

the Doctrin of absolute and irresistible decrees do encourage men to be holy ; we shall weary our selves e're we find one reason to prove it. There can be no Doctrin more pleasing to bad men, for indeed hereby they labour to excuse themselves, telling us, that God has from Eternity absolutely determin'd every thing they should do, and therefore they cannot help it. O how luscious is the high relish of this Doctrin to bad men !

FROM all this it may appear, that the Gentleman might have very well spared that Pathetick Query. *Shall we let it abroad to infect men, without ever discovering the danger of it?* No sure Sir, that were a great fault; pray involve not your self (by a sinful silence) in so much guilt: But alas! if I should put the Author to tell me wherein lies the danger, I could hazard ten to one that he should be puzzled to tell.

But

But this must pass for current Coin, and be as strongly believed, as if it were proved by ten thousand *Mathematical Demonstrations*; else we will be called credulous, and not having so much Faith, as a Grain of Mustard-Seed.

I CONFESS the Author pretends to be very unwilling, *to engage in the nice speculations of controversial Divinity*; but yet it seems he is of so good and condescending a nature, that he cannot resist the great importunity of a noble Friend, he will rather hazard one single look into *things that* (as he says) *are hid*, than disoblige his Friend, or (and indeed this is a strong reason) suffer the *good cause* to be ruined by his silence. And thus we see that by his gracious condescension, he luckily bestows a couple of favours, one upon his friend, and the other upon truth. Sure never was there
any

any man more fortunately happy ; but I forgot it was his fate to do so , and no thanks to him for all this.

THE Gentleman needed not, I think, have troubled himself much with the state of the controversie , since I had done it plainly enough , and I leave you to guess if the Author has done it more clearly.

BUT passing lesser circumstances , I come now to examin the Arguments he brings , to prove , *that the Period of every man's life is unalterably fix'd by the Divine Decree* : this is the grand point he maintains ; a Doctrine long since introduced by the *Stoicks* , and of a later date , espoused by *Mahomet* and his followers.

AND yet if we will believe the Author , this Doctrin is every whit consonant to Scripture , and undoubtedly proved by reason : Well then , let us follow the Author

thor in his search, and see whether such an uncouth notion has a favourable aspect from either of the two.

AS for Scripture, 1. he tells us, *there are many plain Texts which do upon that account, express a kind of propriety, that men may claim in this last Period.* O wonderful subtle disputer! I know no man could argue so profoundly if not a Disciple of *Voetius*: but let us consider the Texts of Scripture he brings to prove this; the first is *Eccl. 9. 12. Man also knoweth not his time.* Now the Author makes this to be the import of the words: *The Period* (says he) *of man's life is fixed by one absolute Decree, and therefore he may call it* [his time.] This is indeed a very ingenious Comment, only it is faulty in that it is singular; for I dare promise, few men ever thought this was the meaning of the Text: If I had been in the
Pulpit

Pulpit I had readily raised this Doctrin; *that the time of our Dying is very uncertain*, and I had proved it by Solomon's words, *man also knoweth not his time.* Another Text he brings, is *Psal. 39. 5. Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days.* But I remember I have already shewed how strangely this Text is brought to confirm a Doctrin it is utterly unacquainted with; see *The Period of Humane Life*, pag. 109. Edit. I. by this brief reply the Author may easily guess what strength is in these or the like Phrases to confirm his opinion.

THE next argument he urgeth is every whit as impertinent; for it is an old and true saying, *Omnia similitudo claudicat*: this the Author seems to smell; but he pretends that he is so wise, as to press them no farther than the scope of the comparisons lead him; but whether this be so or not, I shall briefly examin.

examin. First, *Scripture* (he says) frequently compares the life of man to the Grass; the flourishing and decaying of which, is fixed and determined. *Answ.* It will trouble

the Author to prove, that all Grass doth flourish in the Morning, and decays in the Evening. But I shall grant that there are some Flowers that do; yet this can never prove that the Period of Humane Life is fatally determined. If I remember well, Commentators say, such similitudes are made use of to denote the brevity of man's life. I shall instance but one sacred Text, to prove this is the import of the similitude; the place is *Job 14.*

1, 2. Man that is born of a woman, is of few days and full of trouble, he cometh forth as a Flower, and is cut down. Secondly, He tells us, that the life of man is compared to a Race, Heb. 12. 1.

Answ. It is so, and that very aptly;

aply; but not because the bounds are unalterably fixed, but because of the noble price that is appointed for those who obey the Divine Precepts, and who do not faint in well doing; and the only intent of the comparifon is, that if we expect that Heavenly reward, we must persevere in well doing; as those who run in a Race do not faint and give over, if they expect to obtain the price. *Thirdly,*

The life of man (says he) *is compared to a shadow.* *Ans.* I know

it is, but sure not because it hath determined limits, but because of its duration; for as a shadow quickly passeth away, so the days of man are but few. Hence *Job* tells us, *He fleeth as a shadow.* cap. 14.

2. and the Psalmist speaking of himself says, *I am gone like a shadow when it declineth.* But I have insisted too long in answering such trivial arguments. I will now view if the plain (as he calls them,

them, implying that the former were not) Texts of Scripture he brings, be urged to any better purpose.

THE first plain Text is *Job 14. 5. Seeing his days are determined, &c.* this is indeed the most remarkable place of Scripture we have seemingly standing against us; but in my former discourse I have fully shewn, that it does no way contradict any position I defend. I shall therefore now only consider what he urges against what I there replied, and judge you which of us does succumb.

I cannot (says he) but admire the Author's impudence in making this Text the Basis of his discourse. Good Sir, is this the effect of a mild and gentle Spirit? but I'll pardon this, since may be it is the result of your holy zeal; but if you be not resolved to be an admirer, I will endeavour to
cure

cure that distemper. The reason then why I made choice of that Text was, because I judged it the main place urged in defence of the opinion you maintain; and if this were well cleared and duly explained; and made to make nothing for you, I easily foresaw how little difficulty there would be in answering other Texts.

LET us now view how artificially he draws Job's words in a Syllogystick fear, *If God (says he) has so determined man's days; that he cannot pass those prefixed bounds; then the Period of Humane Life is not mutable; but the first is unquestionable. Ergo. Answ. IF the Author had but remembered how he had stated the case, he had never made use of this argument; for he grants, that both he and I may maintain, that the Period of Humane Life is both mutable and immutable. I did not deny but our days are determined, (see pag. 31.*

and the Author must know, that all the debate is concerning the

But (says the Author) I am heartily glad that he acknowledgeth the infinity of the Divine knowledge, When I first did read this, I thought the Author had forgot himself, for he is but seldom in so good an humour; but when I again viewed what follows, I saw all was spoken Ironice; which will make me ever afterwards suspect his Complements: And if he kiss again, I shall be upon my Guard that he do not betray.

HOW the Divine knowledge is not conjectural, although it be not founded on an absolute Decree, has been briefly manifested in the first Discourse. But because I must follow the Author, I shall forbear to speak of it here, because it comes afterwards to be considered.

A SECOND plain Text of Scripture is *Psal. 90. 3. Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, return ye Children of men. I am the most deceived* if this Text proves what it is brought for. Sure the only intent of the Royal Psalmist here is to shew, that God is the supream Lord and Master of the Universe; who exerciseth an uncontrollable Dominion; and who can according to his pleasure either shorten or prolong the days of man; but there is not one word here of any absolute Decree.

A THIRD plain Text equivalent to the former is *Psal. 68. 20. Unto God the Lord belong the passage to Death.* Now let us hear the Author's Comment, that is (says he) the Period of every man's life is in the hand of God. Now this is indeed very well said; but he sees better than his Neighbours, who says it is spoken to

the purpose. But further, what if he and *Voetius* have given a bad Translation of the Text, if I might hazard to our *English*, (which I think is one of the best Translations) I dare say it is so; for there we read, *Unto God the Lord belong the [issues from] Death.*

THE last plain Text is *Act. 17. 26.* *He hath determined the bounds of our Habitation.* Strange! the Author can never find the word *determine*; but he instantly concludes, that we are to understand an absolute and irrespective Decree. He knows well enough that I grant that the Period of Humane life is determined, why then does he urge these Texts against me?

IN the next place, the Author brings a great many instances to prove the Period of those mens lives, who dye a casual and violent Death, is fixed and determined;

mined; but he needed not to have put himself to so much trouble; since I never maintained, that the World is left to its own casual revolutions. If he had pleased; he might have viewed pag. 76. where he will find, I grant, *that the most seemingly usual periods of men, are ordered by an infinite Wisdom, and fall under the Divine Rule and Dominion.*

NEITHER needs the Author redouble his *NOW, NOW we have the Author yielding*; because I said, *we never doubted, but the great Governour of the world may make what reserved cases he pleases from the general Rule, and the ordinary course of things,* pag. III. This methinks is a very plain Truth; but that I may do all I can to satisfy the Author, I shall add, that the reason why some mens lives may be unalterably determined; and yet the Period of other mens may for or-

dinary be left mutable, is, because the supream Governour of the World thinks fit it should be so. If this will not suffice the Author, let him choose as he thinks best.

BUT to proceed, *since the first step (says he) and moment of our Beings is determined, it is but reasonable to think that the last is also fixed.* *Ans.* It is extremely reasonable, only we must take heed that we do not wrest Scripture to patronize our own self-chosen opinions: Now the Text brought to prove that the first moment of our Being is determined, is *Psal. 139. 16.* which is a very odd Paraphrase of the Author's, for the Psalmist there is not speaking of the Divine Decrees, but of the infinity of the Divine knowledge, which is a depth he confesses he cannot Fathom. Now that God doth know both the first and last moments of our life, is a

Y^{rs} humble

Truth

Truth I am as ready to defend as
the Author.

BUT I see the Author is re-
solved to dispute with me, as if
I were an enemy to a particular
Divine Providence, else to
what purpose does he bring his
following troop of Arguments?
As

1. *All the actions and works, all the
ways and steps of man, are ordered
by God.* *Ans.* All this is con-
fessed by me; if he urgeth them
against any other, let those con-
cerned make answer.

2. *All other animate Beings (says
he) are determined.* *Ans.* To
what and how are they determi-
ned? I know they have a Being, and
that they are all dependent Crea-
tures. (But do you seriously think
that God from Eternity did by an
absolute Decree determine the Pe-
riod of every Creature? Can you
without a certain reluctancy say
that the supream and adorable

Being of whom we ought to entertain noble and becoming thoughts, did by an absolute Decree determin the particular Period of every Flea & Pray consider, Sir, what you say.

Q. *Inanimate Beings* (says he) *are also limited.* Answ. When God first Created the World, he put every thing in a fit and convenient Station; and so exactly ordered every piece of the Creation, that it should be subservient to the whole. Hence he set bounds to the Waters, and appointed the Sun, Moon, and Stars, to be for Signs; and for Seasons; and for Days, and Years; and according to the Primitive Precept, every thing (Angels and Men excepted) stands according as he ordered. But yet these inanimate things are not so fixed, as that upon extraordinary occasions he cannot alter their course.

4. *Do we not (says he) read of the determined Period of Kings and Kingdoms?* *Answ.* Undoubtedly we do, but what then? Do you imagin that God by an absolute Decree did determin the Periods of particular Kings and Kingdoms? Pray consider what the Majesty of Heaven hath said, *1 Kings 9. 4, 5, 6, &c. If thou wilt keep my Statutes and Judgments, then I will Establish the Throne of thy Kingdom upon Israel for ever; but if you will not keep my Commandments and my Statutes, then will I cut off Israel, &c.* Surely the most High ruleth in the Kingdom of men, he putteth down one, and setteth up another, and according as men obey his Statutes, so he dispenseth his favours to them.

5. *It is a dangerous thing (says he) to grant, that the most inconsiderable thing is exempted from the Hand of Divine Providence.* *Answ.*

I am very far from thinking, that the Author is an Enemy to the Divine Providence; but truly of the two opinions, that which he maintains seems to enervate it more than mine; for if God has from Eternity absolutely decreed every thing, then a particular providence whereby he superintends and governs all things, seems not to have any place; but the opinion I maintain puts all things in the hands of God, who may do in Heaven and in Earth as he thinks fit. He may shorten or prolong my life, he may do with me as he pleaseth, for he is our Maker, and we the work of his own hands. This encourageth me to wait and depend upon him, because I know he is the Governour of the World, and has so absolute a Dominion, that none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou?

I HENCE not only those things

things which sustain and uphold men in Being, but also the Period of every man's life depends upon God: As he may either give or deny those necessary things, so may he also shorten or prolong our life. And thus there is no need of running to the absolute Decree, and how I may still be I

Q. It is (says he) an old and unquestionable Maxim of Philosophers, *cujusque contradictionis altera pars determinatè vera est & altera falsa.*

Ans. The Maxim is very true, but not very pertinently applied. For supposing there had never been a World, and so no Decree concerning any thing future, yet this had been true; *both parts of a contradiction cannot be true.* But now if the Author means, that the operations of free Agents are all absolutely determined; this he must prove by some other medium than that Philosophick Maxim, which only infers that one part of

of the contradiction is true, but leaves us ignorant which of the two.

AFTER all this he comes at length to Catechise me most severely. *Will ye* (says he) *have your recourse to a Stoical fate, or Tarkish necessity?* No, good Sir, I assure you I will not, but I am afraid some others may. *Will ye plead* (says he) *from the fortuitous concurrence of Epicurean Atoms?* Or — Pray Sir hold, for it is so long since I was last examined, that I have almost forgot the trick of answering. If I should permit you to proceed, I could only say *No* to all your Questions; and I believe you knew well enough that I was as much an Enemy to all these as your self.

BUT Infee what you have yet said are but slender attempts, and only in order to a more noble and grand design. It is well
to your

your small Shot, discharged in these light Skirmishes, have not hurt us. Come let us proceed, and see the event of the fight.

If God (says he) has not by an absolute Decree determined the Period of every man's life; how can the certainty of the Divine foreknowledge be defended? / Answ. Could the Author be contented with it as the Scriptures leave it, there need be little debate in the case. The Gentleman is pleased to say, that I seem to be like a Ship tossed with a great Storm; but he might have more truly said, that I think that it is a bold enquiry which concerns not us to know, the depths of the Divine Wisdom are too profound for Mortals to measure; and since Sacred Writ calls it a depth, I am sure it is safest to break out into that extasie of admiration with the Apostle, Rom. 11. 33. O the depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and

and Knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellor?

I F God had ever designed that we should know those secrets, he had certainly disclosed them in his revealed Word; but since Scripture is silent, it is our Wisdom to forbear a curious search into things which he hath reserved within his own peculiar Jurisdiction.

BUT I see this will not serve the Author's turn, he will have the very manner of Gods Knowledge of future things determined; and if I cannot tell, yet he can unfold this Secret, by saying, that God has from Eternity absolutely Decreed every thing, therefore he certainly knows every thing. And now because this is the grand Doctrin he always repeats, I shall with-

without being very tedious, first shew him, that we have no ground to believe that every future action is absolutely decreed. And secondly, I shall endeavour to shew, that the Divine knowledge is notwithstanding certain and infallible.

1. WE have no ground to believe, that every future action is absolutely decreed, because God does certainly know all sinful and criminal actions, and yet we cannot rationally conclude that he has absolutely decreed those actions, for this doth neither agree with the justice nor goodness of God. Do you think that a just and good God (who is the Judge of all the Earth) would punish men with everlasting Torments, if he had by an absolute decree determined that they should commit all these Sins? Methinks if this were the case of these miscreants, they might reasonably excuse themselves

selves before their Judge, by al-
 ledging, that they could not do
 otherwise. But truly there is no
 ground for this plea, for he hath
 left men inexcusable, and doth
 not tempt any man to Sin.

B U T I remember the Author
 distinguisheth between an *effe-
 ctive* and *permissive decree*. *Answ.*
 I could never yet well understand
 what they mean by a *permissive
 decree*: If they say, God only per-
 mits Sin, they say right; but
 from thence they can expect no
 sanctuary, for this cannot accor-
 ding to them be a ground to infer
 any certain knowledge; for to
 permit Sin, is in this case only a
 not hindering of men in their
 wicked courses and ways. If you
 yet add, that in that permissive
 decree, the will of man, with
 all the circumstances of time and
 place are included. I Answer,
 that the decree is not then abso-
 lute but *respective*, since both
 persons

persons, and their qualifications are considered: And I must confess this is very agreeable with several phrases of Scripture, particularly with that *Rom. 8. 29. For whom he did foreknow, them also he did predestinate.* So that, if we even run up to the knotty point of predestination, we shall find that the Decrees, both of election and reprobation consider the qualifications of persons, and that foreknowledge preceeds any Decree; and indeed this was the opinion of all learned men before *S. Augustin's* time. *Scriptores veteres* (saith *Melancthon*, cited by *Episcopus*, in his second Epistle to *Bererovicius*) *omnes præter unum Augustinum, putarunt aliquam causam electionis in nobis esse.*

2. We have clear evidences from Scripture informing us, that God did certainly know many things which should have been really future, if the conditions

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upon

upon which their futuration depended had been placed. Our Saviour Christ tells us, that if the mighty works which were done in *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, had been done in *Tyre* and *Sidon*, they had repented. God knew that if *Cain* had done well, he should have been accepted. The whole tenor of the Scriptures abounds with many such like instances. If *Nineveh* had not repented, God knew that they should have been destroyed. It is not absurd to think that God would have threatened to inflict that punishment which he did not know; as certainly he would not, if their Doctrine concerning the absolute Decrees be true. But I remember I have in the former discourse insisted upon this argument; I shall therefore only now consider what the Author answers to the Texts of Scripture there cited.

THE

THE first Text is 1 Sam. 23. 11, 12. which plainly shews, that God did certainly know, that if *David* had not departed from *Keilah*, the *Keilites* had delivered him into the hands of *Saul*. To this he answers, That *David* was not curiously inquisitive concerning the Divine Will, for that was a Secret. Reply. This is a strange fancy, for is it not as certain as any thing can be, that *David* enquired of the Lord whether *Saul* was come to *Keilah*, and if the *Keilites* would deliver him up, which *David* had not known (till it may be, too late) if God had not revealed both. But he says, there was no prediction of any thing which should be. Answer. It's true, *Saul* did not come to *Keilah*, but certainly he should have come, if *David* had remained. And thus the prediction is of what should have happened, if *David* had not left *Keilah*.

And do you think that God would have foretold any thing but what he certainly knew ? Again he adds, *that the prediction was not concerning David's being delivered up, but concerning the inclinations of the people.* *Answ.* The Text speaks nothing of the inclinations of the people, but of a thing future; *They will deliver you up, viz.* if you stay with them: and so *David* does not inquire if *Saul* intends to come up, neither does the Answer he receives imply any such thing.

THE other Text is *2 King. 13. 19.* where the Prophet is angry with the King of *Israel*, for smiting upon the ground but thrice; telling him, that if he had smitten five or six times, he had smitten *Syria*, till he had consumed it. To this he answers, *that is is altogether groundless to imagine, that God had decreed that Joash should smite the Ground more than thrice.*

thrice. *Answ.* We do not say that God had absolutely decreed how oft he should smite the Ground. Scripture makes no mention of any Decree, only this he tells us, that if *Isaiah* had smitten five or six times, he had totally subdued *Syria*. And truly, since we find the Prophet angry with him because he only smote thrice; we may rationally suppose that God had not absolutely decreed that he should smite no oftner. To suppose that the Revelation was general, is only a may be; and we may more warrantably say, what if it was not general?

3. LET us now come to examine the dangerous effects of this Doctrin of this absolute and unconditional Decrees, and the bad consequences which naturally proceed from it. 1. I have shewed that it destroys the freedom of Humane nature. And

C 3 2. That

2. That it makes all lawfull means unnecessary; see *the Period of Humane Life*, pag. 103. 3. It leaves no place for praise to the learned Physician, nor for dispraise to the unskillful Empyrick, pag. 105. And 4. If this Doctrin be pursued to the uttermost, it engages men to expose themselves like fools or mad men to any danger.

BUT 2. Although God has not absolutely Decreed every future action, yet he hath an universal and certain cognizance of every thing. For 1. That I may argue (as they speak) *ad hominem*, I hope the Author will not deny that God knows every thing that is possible, and yet no man ever said, that God decrees what things are possible, and what not. God knew how to raise up Children unto *Abraham* out of the Stones, and yet I think there was no Decree concerning this.

2. God

2. God knows whatsoever is true, but, all future actions are true; if it be true that *Titius* died this day, in such a place, and of such a malady; this was from Eternity true, that he should dye this day, and in such a place. *But ye say,* an action is not future, but because it is decreed. *Answer.* That I may quickly dispatch this, I shall now freely impart what has fully for a long time satisfied me.

THE great and wise Creator, out of his meer pleasure, freely Created this World, and furnished it with varieties of Creatures, of different natures; amongst those, Man made after the Image of his Maker, was created a free Agent. Now since the Eternal Wisdom thought it expedient, that there should be such a Creature as Man, we must not take from him that free principle bestowed upon him in his

Creation : And since it is the good pleasure of Heaven, that Man in all his actions should act freely and without constraint, what reason have we to think that there is any absolute Decree which is inconsistent with this freedom? *And thus*, that there ever was such a Creature as Man, this is the meer result of the Divine Will; that Man acts freely and without constraint, this is also the effect of Divine Goodness; and thus all things depend upon the Divine Will. And because the Divine Knowledge is infinite, he therefore knows every thing that Man is to act; for whatsoever he acts is true, and so consequentially was from Eternity true. This methinks is a plain and easie way, to secure both the certainty of the Divine Knowledge, and the freedom of Humane Nature.

HAVING thus dispatched the two things I proposed, I now return to the Author; where first we find him fighting lustily with *Molina* and *Fonseca*, and Cursing their Bastard (begotten, he says, in the dark, pardon this innocent piece of Drollery) *Scientia media*, with Job's imprecation on

ALTHOUGH it be a digression to discourse of this, yet since the Author thinks he has thereby ruined and undermined all I have said, I shall follow the Author, and briefly examin his arguments he urges against this Doctrin.

THE first assault he makes, is, *That I have recourse to the Jesuitical Port.* *Ans.* He having before compared me to a Ship tossed with a great Storm, it is no wonder though I be glad to get to any safe Haven, if it belongs to the *Jesuites*, the business

ness is not great, since the Port
is secure. And I am sure, the
Author's Doctrine of *Physical pre-*
determination is the invention
of the *Dominicans*; *jam sumus ergo*
pares. (p. 101) *but*

BUT are there no *Protestant*
Divines, who own and main-
tain, that God knows that many
things should have been future,
if such and such conditions had
been placed? Does the Author
know, that *Gomarus*, *Waleus*,
and many other *Foreign Theologs*,
have recourse to *Scientia media*;
And at home, how many lear-
ned Doctors do defend it? Nay
indeed your own *D. Twiss*, who
seems to be one of the greatest
Enemies to it, yet maintains a
notion every whit as unconcieve-
able (as you are pleased to call
this) his *Decretum generale de*
sciendis Creaturas agere, congru-
enter ipsarum naturis, is, may be,
not much different from this.

BUT

BUT if the opinion be true, it matters not much who defends it. Let us now hear what he Objects. *I shall (says he) only in a word or two manifest the unconceivableness of this position.* *Ans.*

I dare hazard for all this promise, he shall have *thirde* beloved, ere he has done. His first word is, *Since antecedently to the Decree all things are purely possible, how can God know that such things are either absolutely or conditionally future?*

Ans. 1. I confess God always knows things as they are, so that if there be nothing future, he could not know them to be future. 2. I grant that it is only the result of the Divine Goodness, that there was ever such a Creature as man. Yet 3. Since God did make man a free Agent, and gave him power to act without constraint; not Physically pre-determining his Will, nor by any absolute Decree fatally over-powering

powering his inclinations, leaving him no liberty for choice: Hence it is, that all and every act that man elicits, is certainly fore-known, although not absolutely determined. For by virtue of that Primitive Precept, men act as freely, as rational Agents act necessarily.

AND thus that grand Objection does not militate against us. For we grant that antecedently to the Decree, Man, and all his future actions were only possible; but after Almighty God had decreed or purposed to make Man, all his future actions, although not absolutely determined, were yet certainly known: and the reason of both, is, because Man being made a free Agent, there can be no absolute Decree everting and overthrowing his nature; and since he was to elect such and such actions, an infinite understanding behoved to know them.

HIS

HIS second argument is, *That all knowledge depending upon conditions, is first suspended, and secondly conjectural.* *Answ.* We do not

say that Divine Knowledge does depend upon conditions; all that we claim, is, that God knows that many things should have been future, if the conditions had been placed: And this we judge is altogether agreeable to Sacred Writ. So that it is only the futuration of things, and not the Divine Knowledge, that depends upon conditions.

'TIS true, man being a free Agent, he may either act or not act, even then when all things requisite for acting are placed: but yet it must be granted, that the Will cannot always hang in an *æquilibrio*; since it is a self-determining principle, it must either will or *nil* the doing of such a thing, and this an infinite intellect doth certainly know.

3. HE Objects, *There is nothing conditionally future in respect of God: For either the Condition is to be placed, and so it becomes absolutely future; or else it is never to be placed, and so it is only possible.*

Ans. I have frequently heard this argument urged, as if it were unanswerable; but I must confess, if my judgment be any ways regardable, it is the only result of ignorance. For first, those who urge it, seem to mistake what is meant, when men distinguish betwixt things absolutely and conditionally future. Things *absolutely future*, are those things which do not depend upon any condition; but things *conditionally future*, are such things as are really future, if the conditions be placed, and should not have been future, if they had not been placed.

NOW although the condition be not placed, yet they differ hugely

hugly from things which are merely possible; for the things merely possible, are not future upon the placing of whatsoever condition: but things conditionally future, should have been really future, if the conditions had been placed.

BUT the Author adds, *That all conditions are included in the absolute Decree.* *Ans.* If there be any conditions included in the Decree, it ceaseth to be absolute, as every mans reason will easily teach him.

AFTER all this the Author tells me, *it is not in his power to reconcile me with my self.* Strange! what an unknown quarrel is this? alas! have I been so unwary as to contradict what I had formerly said; and is the Author willing, but unable to take up the difference? Since he pretends he is not, I will essay what may be done. First, *we have no ground*

to think that God decrees every future action. And the reason I said so, was, because there are many sinful actions which the Majesty of Heaven forbids, and therefore does not absolutely Decree them: And yet I grant, *that the most contingent actions depend immediately upon the Divine Will:* Because the reason why Man was made a free Agent, and acts without constraint, is, because God did Will both.

AND thus I have examined what the Author brings in defence of his own opinion. I come now to survey what he answers to what I urge against it. And

AS I TOLD, *That this Doctrine is a good plea for wicked men.* To this he Answers, *that in the Schools they speak of a two-fold Decree, the one effective, the other permissive.* Reply. I have already discovered the insufficiency of this

this Answer, and therefore shall not repeat.

2. I TOLD, *That it is inconsistent with the freedom of Humane nature.* In Answer to this, he alledgeth, *That the decree does not hinder, but helps Men to act freely.* Reply. Let us examin if it be so; you affirm that God has by an absolute Decree, determined the Period of *Titius* his Life, and that he has also as absolutely decreed every thing that he shall do; now I desire to know of *Titius*, who is a free Agent, that can do any other thing but what is decreed, or if he can do otherwise? If you say he cannot, then pray how is he left a free agent, since he must do all that is decreed, and can do no other thing.

BUT he says, *All kinds of necessity are not inconsistent with liberty.* Answ. What then, is there no kind of necessity inconsistent

D sistent

sistent with it? And is not Man become a necessary Agent, if he cannot but act so and so? Is there any resisting of the decree? But he adds, *We only plead for a determination of events.* *Ans.* The Will is then left free, and God only determins the thing, but not the Will. Pray how absurd is this in this Authors own judgment.

3. I TOLD, *That this opinion leaves no place for praise to the learned Physician, nor for dispraise to the unskilful Empyrick.* He Answers, *That the Physicians deserve praise, because they act as freely as if there were no Decree.* Reply. The Author had done well if he had made this plain, for that which he alledgeth is all along denied by us; and the reason we gave, was, because if the Physician does only prescribe those Medicaments, he was absolutely decreed to ordain; and if he can pre-

proscribe no other, then he deserves no praise, since he does no more but what he could not but do.

4. I TOLD, *That this opinion by a genuine consequence induceth men to expose themselves to any danger: For if the Terminus vite est immobilis; what need men fear to run upon the mouth of the roaring Cannon, if it be their fate to dye, they cannot by all their Art and Skill evite death, if it be not fatally determined, then let us face any danger, we have good enough proof against it.* To this he answers, *That it is just like that argument which Satan propounds to our Lord Christ, Matth. 4. 6. Reply. I am not advising any Man to cast himself upon those dangers, only I tell what is the consequence of this Doctrin.* Now our blessed Master is justly offended with Satan, because of his malicious design in

urging that argument. But there is no question but the argument was strong, and this Christ does not challenge.

But (says he) we must not make the secret determinations of the Divine Council our rule. Reply. If they be secret Councils; we cannot make them our rule: But sure they can no more be said to be secret, since so many Men pretend to know, that God has absolutely determined every thing.

I HAVE quickly dispatched his Answers, because they are indeed slight and inconsiderable. Now let us hear how he vindicates his opinion from that unjust (as he calls it) imputation I have cast upon it; namely, that I say, *it is only the opinion of the Stoicks, dressed up in better apparel: The word Fate is hateful (says he) in the Christian Schools.* *Reply.* May be the Author will find himself

to be in a mistake here: I shall only recommend to him an Author, with whom he seems to be intimately enough acquainted; and that is, *Voetius de vita termino*; in Answer to Object. 6. *Apud Philosophos* (says he) *varia occurrunt fati explicationes, quarum aliqua à veritate & pietate nihil alienum sonant.* — *Nec desunt inter antiquos et recentiores veri Docti qui Stoicorum placitum in dextram partem interpretentur.*

AND indeed any man that compares the two opinions, will find them to be upon the matter the same: the difference that the Author gives betwixt the two, is the very same that I mentioned and told him of. But it is needless to insist here, for the thing is palpable and cannot be denied.

IN the last place the Author comes to answer those arguments I urged in defence of the *mutabi-*

lity of the Period of Humane life. My first argument was, upon the observance of the Divine Laws, there are many promises in Scripture assuring us of length of days; and on the other side, there are many threatnings of cutting short the days of the wicked. In Answer to this, the Author alledgeth many things.

1. HE tells us, The words *prolong, shorten, &c.* do not properly signify to make longer or shorter, but only imply length or shortness of days. Reply. I confess I do not well understand this distinction; but suppose the words were to be understood as the Author takes them, yet all we plead for stands firm: for those that obey the Statutes shall live long, which (with the Author's leave) is the same with having their days prolonged.

2. In these promises (says he) God deals with Men, as Parents use

use to deal with their sick Children: They promise them many things; rather to encourage them to take the bitter potion prescribed, than out of a real intention to bestow such things. Reply. This Answer is indeed unworthy to be considered, since it so much reflects upon the Divine wisdom and goodness, of which we and all men ought to entertain generous and becoming thoughts: His promises and threatnings too, are real and serious. It is not to allure or flatter Men to live holily, that he promiseth to lengthen their days; when he well knows he had absolutely fixed the Period of their life.

3. HE says, *A good life is a long life, and that Abraham died in a good old age, because he was a good Man.* Reply. I know not whether I should smile at the wit and ingenuity of this Answer; or commend the Author for

his happy invention: But it matters not which of them we admire.

4. *The wicked (says he) are said not to live out half their days, because according to the ordinary course of nature, the date of their lives might have been longer.* Reply. But if the Period of their lives be absolutely determined, this supervenient Decree takes away that supposed possibility of their living longer. 2. This Answer is to flight and inconsiderable as to the end for which it is produced, that it does not in the least agree with the words of the Text; for in this sense, many godly Men may be said not to live out half their days. But the Psalmist by such a phrase holds out, that the impiety of the wicked is the cause that their days are shortened; which he could not have said, if their days had been absolutely determined.

5. HE says, *The wicked may be said not to live out half their days, in respect of their hopes and expectations.* Reply. The sacred Text makes no mention of the hopes and expectations of the wicked ; nor does this Paraphrase any ways agree with the Psalmists intention.

1. THE Psalmists intention was to shew, that wickedness is the reason and cause of Mens short lives. Now if he had only meant their hopes and expectation , he needed not have made any mention of the wicked ; for this might have been applicable to the most part of Men, both good and bad.

2. IT agrees not with the Text, for if their days be determined , they live out their whole time, let them dye whensoever: So that he could never have said, *They shall not live out half their days.* And indeed this had been

no great punishment inflicted upon the wicked for their Sins, if it mean only their hopes; for good Men may thereby be as well included: and the wicked are not a whit more unhappy than others, if the case be so.

THE Author is angry with me, because I said, *That if we consult experience, we shall find the Religious and Vertuous Men enjoy ordinarily far the longest lives.* Truly I see no reason to repent what I said, nor does the wise Man's Observation any ways contradict this; for all that he aims at there, is to shew, that a good Man's Righteousness will not be able to defend him from the malice and cruelty of the Wicked, and that Wicked Men may pass on in their Sins without controul.

THAT the Divine promises are notable encouragements to live holy and devoutly, is very plain
plain

plain and undoubtable: But yet it may be questioned whether, according to some Mens principles, they be useful for the foresaid end.

A S E C O N D argument I did urge, was taken *from the pious and devout Prayers of the Righteous, and their turning from their Sins by an hearty Repentance.* To this he Answers, *That the Divine Statutes, although they be irrevocable, yet do not exclude the use of Prayer, because it is included in the Decree.* Reply. I have already told if there be any condition, the Decree is not absolute: But because I find the Author has always recourse to this fancy, I shall briefly evidence, that the Author cannot make use of such an evasion. *Prayer and Repentance* (says the Author) *are conditions absolutely decreed, and therefore they are necessary.* Reply. The Stoicks may have recourse to this,
as

as well as you: For Prayer and Repentance are hereby made necessary, not because Men elicit those acts as parts of their duty, but because they cannot do otherwise. And thus the Prophet *Daniel* could not but pray, that Gods anger should be removed from his people *Israel*; because it was absolutely before decreed. The like was *David's* case, and others, mentioned by the Author.

BUT by this means, the promises of Scripture can be of no use to induce us to live holily, for they are not conditional: Thus, if you obey the Divine Statutes, ye shall live long; and if ye rebel, ye shall be punished. But you shall obey the Divine precepts, and live long; and you shall live wickedly, and have your days shortened.

T H A T Prayer and Repentance have been the means of prolonging

longing many Mens lives, is obvious to experience; some few instances to confirm so plain a truth, I laid down in the first discourse. I shall therefore now only examin the Author's Answer.

THE first instance was concerning the case of *Nineveh*, where I told, *That their Repentance did prevent the Execution of the threatned Judgment.* To this he answers; 1. *That Prayer and Repentance do not move God to change his Decree.* Reply. We do not say that they do, only we say, there was no absolute, but conditional Decree in the case. 2. He says, *That their Repentance was from Eternity decreed.* Reply. How then could the threatening be serious? Do you think that a holy, wise, and just God would threaten to inflict a Judgment upon a people, when he had absolutely decreed that such a Judgment should not
be

be inflicted? To this, which he could not but take notice of, he answers, *That such threatnings only imply, that the nature of the crime deserved to be punished with this Judgment.* Reply. I know the merit of every Sin is death, but this is no Answer to the difficulty, for the threatening not only implies the demerit of the offence, but also expressly declares, that the Judgment threatned should be inflicted, if they did not by their Prayers and Repentance prevent the Execution of it.

A S E C O N D instance I urged, was *Hezekiah's recovery, &c.* To this he Answers, 1. *That we must distinguish between the threatnings and decrees of God.* Reply. Well, we shall observe this caution, but upon this proviso, that the Author will not make the threatening inconsistent with the Decree: for if God had absolutely decreed that *Hezekiah* should
not

not dye 'till the fifteen years were expired, then how could the threatning, *Thou shalt surely dye and not live*, be serious? But that the first was not absolutely decreed appears to be plain; for otherwise, how could the fifteen years be said to have been *added to his life*?

2. HE says, *The denunciation of death was a conditional commination absolutely propounded; inducing Hezekiah to Repentance, having no respect to the absolute Decree.* Reply. This Answer is not conformed nor agreeable to the Author's principles, for he alledgeth that both the threatning and Repentance are absolutely decreed: now if the threatning had been an argument to engage *Hezekiah* to Repentance, we must suppose that Repentance was not absolutely decreed, but a thing depending upon *Hezekiah's* will; otherwise both the threatning and Repen-

Repentance were slight, and of no force: Nay indeed, since the commination was only a Moral act, it might have been an inefficacious motive. But since it had (as the Author will say) its efficacy from the internal operation of the holy Spirit, hence is it, that Repentance can be no condition required on Man's part, since it is not in his power not to Repent when God works it in him. And truly this makes the threatening ridiculous, for how can it be a motive to induce to Repentance, since Repentance is absolutely decreed, and in time by a Physical predetermining act wrought in Man nill he will he.

HOW the Author will be able to absolve himself from having any respect to the two dangerous opinions, he says we must by all means avoid, I wish he would seriously consider.

I DO not well understand the meaning of one phrale the Author useth, viz. *That God did not will that Hezekiah should dye when he threatned him; only he willed that there should be such a threatening.* This is indeed pretty subtle, but I know not for what end it was brought: Sure it is not very pertinently alledged, if he thinks hereby to prove, that there is no opposition between the Decree and the threatening; as may appear by what I have already said.

3. WE must distinguish (says he) *between the conjectural certainty of death, inferred from the fatal events which frequently accompany dangerous Diseases; and the infallible certainty of death, inferred from the Decree.* Reply. The distinction is without controversie good, and it is but reason we believe it; but I assure the Author's application is not always allowable.

I shall make this out by considering how he applies this distinction. *In respect of the first* (says he) *Hezekiah's death might have been said to be certain.* Reply. We are not to debate what might have been, but what really was. Now that denunciation, *Thou shalt certainly dye and not live*; was no conjecture taken from the danger of the disease, but a prediction or prophecy revealed by God to his servant *Isaiah*.

ANOTHER instance I urged, was *Jer. 18. 7, 8.* where we have a lively proof of the vertue and efficacy of Prayer and Repentance. To this he repeats his old answer, *That they are therefore efficacious because included in the Decree.* Reply. If they be indeed as absolutely decreed as the end, then they are truly efficacious, but not as conditions required of us to perform, but because they cannot but be efficacious,

acious, because, decreed: And thus all things come to pass fatally.

A T H I R D argument to prove that our lives may be extended or shortened, I urged from the use of Medicaments. To this he Answers, *That it is a precarious principle to separate the means from the end, since the Decree is of both.* Reply. If the Decree including both be absolute, then both the means and the end must be: But then, as I already told, the means are placed not in reference to the end, but because they could not but be placed. There were but two consequences which we have always alternatively urged; namely, if the Period of Humane life be absolutely determined, then either Humane care and industry is needless, since all the Medicaments of the World cannot prolong our life one moment beyond the Divine decree;

nor the neglect thereof shorten our life : • Or else those Medicaments we must use are likewise absolutely decreed, and then we must of necessity use them : And thus all care and choice , all consultation and deliberation is quite destroyed. The skillful Physitian upon this account deserves no praise , nor the ignorant any challenge ; for the necessity that is placed excludes both.

NOW if the opinion the Author maintains does not condemn the use of Medicaments , yet it introduceth a fatal necessity, which is every whit as repugnant as the former , and inconsistent with the principles of Reason and Religion.

AND thus *Abraham* could not neglect the care of his Son *Isaac* ; and *Hezekiah* could not but use the means , notwithstanding he knew fifteen years should be added to his life : for in the Author's

thor's judgment both were absolutely decreed.

4. I TOLD, *Nothing is more evident, than that there are several things which have a Physical efficacy, both in the prolonging and shortening of our lives.* He An-

swers, 1. *That God does not hinder second causes from acting, according to that power he hath implanted in them.* Reply. Although this

be no Answer to the argument, yet I shall take notice of it, as I have done of many things which did not much deserve to be regarded. And 1. That God does

not for ordinary hinder second causes from acting, according to that power implanted in them in their Creation, is true: But yet in extraordinary cases, the supreme Governor of the World may overpower the Wills of the free Agents, and hinder them from acting what their Wills are bent to commit, and he may impede

natural Agents in acting what naturally they are determined to do. But 2. How can the Author imagine this to be reconcileable with his opinion? For it is the nature of a free Agent to elicit actions freely; but if God has from the out-goings of Eternity absolutely decreed every thing they shall do, they are no more left at liberty to do or not do, but they must of necessity elicit the act they are determined to. But the Author adds, *That all things which conduce, either to the prolonging or shortning of our life, are included in the Decree.* Reply. If they be indeed included in the Decree, then it is not absolute but conditional, and upon fore-sight of mens being placed in those circumstances; but if he say that all circumstances are absolutely decreed, then I again tell him that he must shew us how all things come not to pass by a Fatal necessity.

THE

THE last argument I urged, was, That many Men had lived longer, if they had not foolishly exposed themselves to danger. To this he Answers, That Mens exposing themselves to danger was included in the Decree. Reply. If the Author means that God did foresee all the circumstances which Men are placed in, in time, and then decreed the Period of their life; he may indeed say, that Mens exposing of themselves to danger is included in the Decree: But if he thinks that God did decree that Men should be exposed to those dangers which put a Period to their lives; then he entertains unbecoming thoughts of God; and wherever he learned this Doctrin, I am sure it hath no Foundation in Scripture. See this more fully cleared, *Period of Humane Life*, pag. 133, 134.

THERE remains no more now, but that I conclude with

my earnest intreaty, that Men
would heartily comply with the
last words of the Author's dis-
course; namely, That it is our
wisdom and advantage to live as
those, who know that e're long a
Period shall be put to their Beings.
If the Author be offended that I
have considered his Answer, I
hope I shall please him by say-
ing,

*Non equidem vellem, sed me mea
Fata trahebant.*

FINIS.



AN
APPENDIX.
WHEREIN SEVERAL
OBJECTIONS,

URGED

In private Conferences, are examined.

TOGETHER WITH

*A Survey of Mr. GALE'S
severe, but groundless charge.*

THE great desire I have
to clear all doubts
which can be urged a-
gainst the opinion I de-
fend, has engaged me in several
private conferences to try what
arguments men of better judg-
ment

ment than my self can produce.

But the truth is, instead of arguments, all I could hear urged was odious censures, which as I have always accounted unquestionable evidences of a bad cause, so do I apprehend that method very incongruous, either to convince others, or to find out the truth.

And although I have no great desire to put my hand into a Hornets Nest, yet because I now intend to put a close to this debate, I shall briefly examin all those particular charges I have met with, hoping that henceforth men will shew more candor and ingenuity, and not rashly and inconsiderately calumniate an Author they know not, nor condemn an opinion with hard words, when they can urge nothing of reason against it.

The

The first heavy charge I met with, is, that the opinion I defend is not *Orthodox*, and that the Author is an *Arminian*; this censure I have in part already considered, I shall therefore now only desire to know by what rule they measure an opinion to be true or false? If they will make Scripture judge, I am sure their charge is false; see *Period of Humane Life*, pag. 118, 119, &c. Nay, if they will but stand to the determination of reason, they will find themselves at a loss; but if they run from Scripture and reason, and make their own crooked fancy the rule, I cannot help the matter.

Common experience convinceth us, that the most uncouth notion is judged *Orthodox* by some men, and that the best opinion has not had the good hap to be entertained by all men; but the odious censures of men is not enough
to

to make a good opinion bad, otherwise we should be continual seekers, but never find one Truth.

I confess they are but little acquainted with the Writings of *Orthodox Divines*, who say they oppose the mutability of the Period of Humane Life; for my own part I could never find any condemn it but the *Stoicks* of old and of late Mr. *Hobbs*, and his Disciples, and those who run up to the absolute decrees of Election and Reprobation. And although it be rejected and disallowed by such, yet I hope they are not the only *Orthodox Divines*.

The present age (God be thanked) is wiser than to be affrighted with the word *Arminian*; those who use such Objections may please themselves to dispute with Children; but if they combat with Men, they will be but jeered and contemned. I confess some few years since it was scandal
enough

enough to be called an *Arminian*; but those dark days are gone, and I hope in after ages that which some men account an opprobrious charge, shall be esteemed Honourable.

Notwithstanding all this, I do not say that I am an *Arminian*, nor am I offended at others who call themselves *Calvinists*: But methinks it were more Christian like to reject all such names which keep up differences amongst us; than to say, *I am of Paul*, and *I of Apollo*, and a third distinct from both, *I am of Cephas*.

2. Some men have told me, if the shortning or lengthening out of our life doth depend upon our use, or neglect of the means, then Gods particular providence in Governing the World is enervated, if not quite destroyed.

Ans. I have been far rather induced to believe, that the Antithesis

titheſis of the opinion we defend,
 oppoſeth the Divine providence;
 for truly if all things are fatally
 fixed from Eternity by an abſolute
 Decree; whether there be any
 providence or not, things muſt
 come to paſs according to that
 ſempiternal ſeries and concatena-
 tion of cauſes; but by maintain-
 ing the mutability of the Period
 of Human Life, the Divine pro-
 vidence doth moſt conſpicuouſly
 appear, ſometimes in removing
 thoſe things which ſhould have
 put a Period to our Beings; ſome-
 times permitting us to be expoſed
 to unſeen and unexpected dangers.
 O how wonderful, wiſe, and
 myſterious are the ways of God!
 His Providence is univerſal, and
 extending to the moſt inconfide-
 rable actions. But yet we muſt
 not fooliſhly imagin, men are
 acted like meer Machins. The Di-
 vine providence doth not deſtroy
 the innate freedom of Human
 natures.

natures. It is indeed evident by the light of nature, that the great Creator of the World should order and govern it. No Parent is so regardless of his Children as to expose them to the dangers of the World. The very Brutes by a natural instinct guard, secure, and take care of their young. And can we think that our kind Creator who has implanted these principles of Care and Kindness in his Creatures towards their offspring, shall be less regardless of his own Creatures.

We then heartily accord that the Divine providence is vigilant and universal, and the opinion we maintain gives us all the encouragements that can be, to entertain so noble and generous thoughts of that adorable Being, who upholds us in Being. How frequently had a Period been put to our lives, if his watchful eye and careful providence had not
 secu-

red us from imminent dangers.

When I consider that the Period of my life is not immutably and absolutely fixed, but may be Millions of ways shortened, this encourages me to cast my self upon the Divine care and providence. But for others who are of a contrary opinion, I confess I cannot see how they have any motive to do so, for they being once confirmed in that opinion, that their days can neither be extended nor shortened, they need use no diligence for their safety; they cannot be encouraged to address themselves to their Heavenly Father by Prayer, since all Care, Diligence, Prayer, &c. are ineffectual, and cannot alter the determination.

3. Others have told me, that I make the Creature independent.

Ans. They may as well say, I make the Creature the Creator, for

for both are equally false. I confess it is not in my power to keep men from deducing illegal consequences, and leading an opinion with inferences it is utterly unacquainted with: yet, since they are pleased to observe this method, I will first vindicate my own opinion, and then examin whether theirs can be more justly condemned.

First, then altho I grant that the Period of Humane Life, is for Ordinary, Mutable; yet, I constantly affirm, That God is the Supream Moderator and Governor of the world, and is this to make the Creator independent: nay, Almighty God not only adhibets a general concurse, but he also in a more special and particular providence, either affords or withdraws occasions of Safety: It is in his power to Shorten or Prolong our lives, and this he does many different
F wayes,

wayes, which because they are sometimes ordinary and common, we but seldom regard them, but when by an extraordinary providence he affords us unexpected deliverances, we are then more sensible that his hand brought us help; And is all this a deifying of the Creature?

That Man, Created a free agent should be absolutely and Physically predetermined to act, is a harsh notion, quite contradictory to the common sentiments of mankind; and yet by opposing this Predetermining influx, I do not make man an independent Creature; for an independent Creature is a plain contradiction; but it is evident enough, that it implyes no contradiction, for God to Create a free agent, who shall not stand in need to be Physically predetermined to every act. Now this once being admitted, it may

may easily appear, that the Period of Humane Life is not immutably fixt; for since man acts freely, he may either chuse or reject, this or the other means, upon which the extention, or abbreviation, of his Life consists.

And yet Man is not hereby made an independent being; for as God hath set bounds to him, over which he cannot pass, *It being appointed for all men once to die*; So hath he also absolute rule of him, and may say, *return ye Children of men*. And thus although man is made a free agent; yet he is not exempted from the Divine Providence.

But, Those who defend the contrary opinion, although they grant that man does in all his actions depend upon God, yet, they of necessity must deny that he immediatly depends upon him: for, besides the Divine eternal Volition, they more over add a

Physical predetermining influx, efficaciously and irresistably moving the will, which must necessarily mediate between the Creator and Man.

And thus, although God has not absolutely decreed the Period of every Mans Life, nor does by a Physical predetermining impulse move him to act, which should make him rather a Machin than a Man, yet Man is not independent in acting, but depends immediately upon the Divine Will, as I have already explained.

Indeed he who thinks the Creature is independent, if it be not Physically predetermined to act, entertains a strang notion of independency: for it is certain that the Humane Will is not thus predetermined to sinful acts, and I also desire to know if necessary agents be thus acted: methinks such a superadded determination

mination is very needless since that natural propention, which the great Creator endued them with, is fixed and permanent and sufficient enough to determin them to act: for instance the Fire, by it's natural determination, necessary burns the wood, and it needs no impulse, or superadded motion to determin it, and yet neither the Human Will nor free agent are independent beings.

But not to insist in the refutation of such trivial censures, which the Authors can never form in mode and figure against what I have laid down in that discourse, I shall now in the close examin Mr. *Gales* severe charge laid down in his Court of the *Gentiles* part 3. page.

As an Appendix (Says he) to natural Philosophy, we may add Medicine which has had a powerfull influence upon Atheisme in

this regard, because these proud Naturalists observing by long experience many excellent qualities, virtues and Medicinal influences, in several Minerals, Stones, Plants, Animals, &c. hence would fain perswade themselves and the World, the term of Mans Life was not fixt but variable and determinable by their art and Medicaments, which piece of Atheism continues to this very day very common.

Methinkes Mr. *Gale* if he had been so good natured, might have very well spared this Scandalous language and not have treated those Learned men so contemptuously; but I see it is his humor to make every thing have an influence upon Atheism, and to quarrel with all Philosophy but his own Reformed Scheme: and yet it is ten to one if some ill natured Inquisitive men find not out some vanity, and malignity in
his

his own, which whether it may arise from the vanity and malignity of the object. Or 2. From the vanity and malignity of the subject. Or, 3. from the curse of God or both, is an Enquiry I shall not determine, till I better understand what sense these phrases can admit.

But methinks it is a strange thing why he is so much offended with Pagan Philosophers, since he alleadges as a prime cause of vain Philosophy, the innate, congenite darkness or the native ignorance of the understanding; now how unreasonable is it to challenge men for erring if ignorance be congenite or native to the understanding? He may as well be angry with them because they had not these clear revelations of the Divine mind we are now blessed with.

And yet, although there were many errors in their Philosophy,

we must not therefore condemn natural Philosophy nor reject all those arts and sciences which have errors necessary (in this imperfect state) annexed to them ; if we do so we must reject all arts and sciences and even his (I had almost mistaken and said) *own* reformed Philosophy. That Idolatry, Atheism, &c. are the effects of natural Philosophy, is a dangerous position of the Authors, for by the dark light of nature men may know that there is a God and that Divine worship and adoration is only to be given to that Supreme and Adorable Being , and if natural Philosophy be rejected how shall we be able to dispute with Atheists who wickedly deride Sacred Writ.

But as natural Philosophy hath no powerful influence upon Atheism, so neither hath Medicine, which he adds as an appendix to the former, however the

the Authors unbounded Zeal transports him beyond the just bounds of civility and moderation.

And now, that I may more particularly examin this censure, I shall first shew that Mr. *Gales* memory is as weak as his judgment; and that he has quite forgot that he makes this piece of Atheism the effect of Pagan Philosophy. Secondly, I shall make it evident that those proud (as he imprudently and with more arrogance calls them) Naturalists were neither proud in there observations he condemns, nor proud in the inference deduced from thence: and Thirdly, I shall make it plain that Mr. *Gale* may be justly charged with maintaining more dangerous opinions.

I begin with the First, to shew that Mr. *Gale* elsewhere seems to condemn himself for saying, that it is the effect of
Pagan

Pagan Philosophy to say, the Period of Humane Life is variable; to make out this I shall only desire him to review part 4, page 455. where he will find himself saying *I am not ignorant* (the words are Mr. Gales) *how much some of late, as well Divines as Phisitians, have essayed to exempt the Period or term of Humane Life from the immutable determination of Divine providence; but how much this hypothesis contraditts both Pagan and Sacred Philosophy, will be more fully evident, by what followes.*

Now, methinkes the Author took too much pains to note, that an effect of Pagan Philosophy, which he confesseth, is contradicted by it: but not to take any more notice of the Authors fighting with himself: I shall proceed to the Second, Namely, that Phisitians were neither Arrogant in there observations. he is pleased to mention

tion none yet in that inference deduced from hence.

First they were nor proud in their observations; for to take notice of the excellent qualities and virtues of Herbs, Minerals, Animals, &c. is so far from being discommended and reprehended, that it is rather to be regrated, that men of learning and abilities should want encouragements to proceed in such enquiries: and truly those who lay out there time in such a commendable study, will unquestionably be celebrated by posterity, when the names of those who discourage them shall be unsavory if not extinguished.

Can it be questioned by any, who pretends reason, that there are excellent noble and specifick vertues in some Plants, Animals, and Minerals against several destempers: if this be doubted common experience

rience will abundantly attest it; but since this is so plain and evident is it not lawfull from hence to infer that the Period of Human Life, is not absolutely fixt: for if this were true it were needless to search out the vertues and effects of those things, which can be used to no purpose.

But the great charge is, that to affirm the term of Mens lives is mutable, is a *piece of Atheism*.

To prevent such calumnies there is no help but according to the old saying *si accusasse sat esset quis foret innocens?* And I am sure the Scriptures teach us another lesson and right reason too; as for Pagan Philosophy I confess I am not so much concerned to examin it. I Know he has the Stoick Philosophers Patronizing his notion, while in health, but I doubt if sickness does not alter there judgments.

It

It is indeed good company to see the most strict Stoick and those of that persuasion, post away messengers for the Physician when under diseases; which is evidence enough that they do not believe the truth of what they maintain.

That the Hypothesis we defend contradicts neither natural nor Sacred Philosophy, has been plainly enough demonstrated in our former discourse, neither doth Mr. *Gale* for all his promise, urge it with any argument, but in stead of doing so he himself seems to be guilty of that which he injuriously blames in others: And thus I am led to the third thing proposed to be discussed; namely, that Mr. *Gale* may be justly charged with maintaining more dangerous opinions; and to make good this charge I shall only (because of the intended brevity) mention two particulars.

The

The first is laid down in the Court of the *Gentiles* page 367. where distinguishing Gods Justice in Absolute and Ordinate he adds, *that God by his absolute justice and dominion can inflict the greatest torments even of Hell it self on the most innocent Creature.* This is indeed a morsel which sober men cannot well swallow; it being so quite contrary to that common notion which all mankind entertain of God, and to those excellent attributes of his glorious nature, by which he has discovered himself to the world both by his word and workes.

That Almighty God is to be admired for his excellent power and works of wonder, no sober man ever doubted, but to admit an unlimited power incompatible with the principle attributes and perfections of his Glorious nature, such as his Goodness, Holiness, Mercy and Justice,

Justice, this were instead of exalting his excellent power, & denying of a Deity or at least a making him, who is altogether Holy, merciful and Good, seem (it is horrid to speak it) Savage and Cruel. The Divine goodness, truth and sanctity assure us that he can do nothing that is unbecoming his Glorious nature nor repugnant to his chiefest perfections displayed in his Sacred Word and dayly evident by his Workes.

Let us here appeal to judicious Mr. Calvin lib. de Etern. Dei predest. *Sorbonicum illud dogma in quo sibi plaudunt Papales Theologastri detestor, quod potentiam absolutam Deo affingit: Solis enim lucem à calore evellere facilius erit, quam Dei potentiam separare à justia* and page 191. *facessant ergo procul à pijs mentibus, monstrosæ illæ Speculationes, plus aliquid Deum posse quam conveniat, vel eum sine*

sine modo ac ratione quicquam agere;
 &c.

Surely if to destroy the righteous with the wicked temporally was rejected by *Abraham* as a piece of injustice, unbecoming the Divine goodness. *Gen.* 18 25. *That be far from thee to slay the righteous with the wicked,* Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right: how much rather may we say so, when men tell us that God can inflict the greatest torments even of Hell it self on the most innocent Creature; it were easie to answer all the silly instances brought in defence of this horrid Doctrin, but I have said enough in the passing against it, only I must add that this is a most dangerous opinion inclining men to entertain unworthy conceptions of a Deity. *Plutarch lib. de Superst.* discoursing of the folly of the Pagans, to pacifie there offended Gods

Gods Sacrificed men and women to them, adds that *Diagoras*, and his Followers more reasonably maintained the Being of such Gods than those who confessed a God, and believed they could be appeased by such Savage cruelty.

The Second particular I shall instance, is laid down pag 483. and frequently else where, *God* (says he) *is the prime efficient cause of the material entitive act of Sin.* I know some others have undertaken the defence of this infamous Tenet, but patronize it who will, it is an uncouth opinion and chargeth the Holy Lord, who is not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, with Mens Sins.

I confess, I could never yet understand what more was asserted by those blasphemous Hereticks, who boldly affirmed that God was the Author of Sin; for
 G which

which pious antiquity did jointly condemn them; for if the evil or obliquity of Sin be (as they say) either privation or relation, it is evident that they necessarily result from the placing of such actions and cannot but follow their acts.

It is indeed pity, that our Reformed Divines should be all blamed for the faults only of a few who have imbibed this *Dominican* venom, and I have often regretted to see the *Jesuits* so miserably baffle men, maintaining this odd and uncouth notion, and yet it is but unhandsom dealing to charge that notion upon all reformed *Churches*, which has been alwayes condemned by the most Judicious Writers we have.

But to dispatch this as quickly as I can, I shall only desire a satisfactory Answer to the few following Queries.

First, If God be the prime efficient cause of the material entitive

entitive act (that I may use his phrase) of Sin, does not God necessitate the Will to Sin? since Man is hereby made the Instrumental cause and God the principal overruling efficient cause, and do you think that the Instrumental cause, can resist when the principle cause irresistably determines it to act?

Secondly, Is not the act pre-scinded from the object? A meer fancy and notion: Can there be either Love or hatred when there is no object to terminate them upon?

Thirdly, If the material act of Sin be Good, is not every sinfull act Morally Good as well as Morally Evil.

Fourthly, When we enquire if there be any thing in the hatred of God that is good, do we not Speak of a particular act terminat upon its object, and not of a Chimerical act which can have no being? G 2 Fifthly

Fifthly, Is not that Sinfull which is prohibited? but the act it self is forbidden Men, or forbidden to do such and such things, and their doing or acting makes them lyable to punishment. Do not Men by doing or omitting that which the Divine precepts forbid, become guilty? Is not Sin a transgression of the Law, and do not men transgress and violate the Divine precepts when they either commit or omit the forbidden action? Hence is it that very many Learned Men rationally conclude that Sin is not a privation, but a positive thing, since the act is alwayes forbidden, and therefore it must be formally evil; and I confess it is a hard matter to conjecture what can be the foundation of that privation; or if the act be placed, how the obliquity does not necessarily result.

Sixthly, To permit is properly

a not hindring or impeding Men to act; therefore the act is permitted, for what can be hindered cannot be properly said to be permitted, but the obliquity is such.

Seventhly, If it were the obliquity and not the act that is permitted, then neither Devils nor Men could tempt us to Sin, for they cannot do any more but Intice and Allure us to the committing or omitting of the Acts, which being placed, the obliquity does necessarily result.

Eighthly, Are Man any other waies said to be hindered from Sinning, but because they are impeded from committing the Act; how then can the Holy Lord, be the prime efficient cause of the substrate matter, or material entitative Act of Sin?

I have indeed seen an excellent *M. S. S.* where this odious opinion, which has made our *Church*

is solidly rejected; till such time as that become publick, these few Arguments I have pitched upon, may be of use to convince us that Mr. *Gale* is in a mistake.

I should now have proceeded to the consideration of those Arguments he brings in defence of his opinion, but I find this will be more pertinent afterwards, when a more fit occasion may offer.

Now to conclude, it is my hearty desire that we may not, while we are disputing about the Period of our Lives, forget our Mortality. Ere it be long a Period will be put to our beings; and is it not our greatest concernment to mind this in time, that when this Life is ended we may be admitted into that glorious assembly of the Saints above, who Live, but can die no more?

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